

The Wisdom of Integrity.

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

St. Saviour's Southwark,

For the REVEREND

Dr. HENRY SACHEVERELL,

On SUNDAY, May 6. 1711.

By PAWLET St. JOHN, A. M.
Rector of Yelden, and Chaplain to the Right
Hon^{ble} Pawlet Earl of Bolingbrook.

He that walketh Uprightly, walketh Surely.

L O N D O N :

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TO THE READER.

IT was no small Advantage to this very plain Discourse, to the publishing of which the Desire of many, and the Seasonableness of the Argument it self invites me, that it was deliver'd to an Audience prepar'd by their PASTOR to receive its Doctrines, and on a Duty to which *He* seem'd to listen with *some Pleasure*, because He had practis'd it with *greater*.

To the Glory of GOD, to the Safety of his CHURCH, and the Comfort of his CHOSEN, He held fast his *Integrity*, and would *not let it go*, when with an equal Contempt of Danger and Preferment, He boldly stem'd the Tide of Faction and Prophaneness, thro' a Trial in which He Himself the *Prisoner* stood *Singly unconcerned*, and with a Firmness, which nothing less

than God, and his Cause, and a well-assured Integrity, could possibly have inspir'd.

Israel look'd back, and survey'd the new *Salvation* with Wonder and Delight; That it was G O D, who by the Ministry of his Servant had deliver'd us from our Enemies; That it was G O D, who troubled their Host, and perplex'd their Marches, and oppress'd them in the *Waters* they had themselves divided, when pursuing us too far.

And here should I go on to do Justice to His Character, by repeating a Transaction, so known in all Countries, and so Providential to our own, there were room enough for Surprise without Invention, and for Praises without Flattery; If yet a Clergyman may be prais'd for his Integrity; for sure it can be no great Compliment to a Minister of the Gospel, to be told that he is *Honest*; In Us 'tis Treason to prevaricate, in Us even Indifference it self commences an Apostacy.

What then shall we say of those, who forgetful of their Vows, and regardless of their Order, have wantonly deserted us upon
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the Change of a Ministry, or the Convictions of a Benefice? What of those, who out of a pretended Charity to all other Communion, and real Indifferency for their own, have tenderly given up the Sense of an Article, or the Force of a Commandment? What shall we say of those, who, in Compliment to Liberty, have modestly grafted Rebellion upon an Apostle, and Thanksgivings on a Martyrdom? What of those, who, out of their peculiar Concern for the Interests of Religion, forget not upon Occasion to MANAGE with Zeal for Hypocrisy, and with Moderation against Heresy?

Blessed be God, the Truths of our Religion have better Arguments to support them, than the Sincerity of such Professors; strong enough, we hope, to repel the Poyson of their Errors, and the Scandal of their Practices.

And for Him, who has been One Great Instrument under God in our Deliverance, as long as we retain any Abhorrence of Hypocrisy, any Value for Religion, as long as
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the Name of the Church of England it self
shall be dear amongst us, for our Brethren
and Companions sakes, we will wish Him Pros-
perity; Yea for the House of the Lord our God,
We will seek to do Him good.

JOB

I
J O B XXVII. 5, 6.

Till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me: My Righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: My Heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live.

TH E S E were the Words of Good and Holy J O B, the most innocent, perhaps, and yet at the same time the most afflicted Man that ever was; I might have added, the most *miserable* of all Men, had he not been *innocent*. And in them we cannot but observe, what a mighty Satisfaction the good Man takes in the Peace of his Conscience, and the Performance of his Duty, and the Steadiness of his Resolution (whatever should befall him) *never to let that go*, Never to be flatter'd nor frighted out of it by any Temptation or Discouragement whatsoever. And never surely was there a Resolution more vigorously maintain'd, or more eminently rewarded: For to make good the Cha- Job 1. racter God himself had given of his Servant, we find him remarkably put upon all the several Trials that Human Nature is capable of undergoing. The Devil had pretended, that *Integrity*, supported with a *prosperous* Condition, was but an imperfect Discovery of the Man; and never would desist, until he had obtain'd a Commission from God to assault and prove him with the Extremities of *Adversity*. And no sooner had he obtain'd it, but immediately he enters upon the Execution of it

it with all the Spite and Fury he is Master of. In one mournful Day, he blasts the Fortunes of his House, and the Hopes of his Posterity, brings down this mighty Prince from his Palace to the Dunghil, and there afflicts him sorely with Poverty and Disease : Those few of his Friends
Job 2. he suffers to go near him (and the Wife of his own Bosom amongst the rest) instead of being the Comforters of his Affliction, are the Reproachers of his Insincerity.

In this forlorn and disconsolate Condition, 'twas this good Man's Happiness to have somewhat in Reserve, which he still could safely call *his own*, something which 'twas neither in the Power of the Devil to ravish, nor of the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* to plunder, nor of any outward Violence to destroy.

In the want of all the good Things he had formerly abounded with, 'twas his Comfort still (and a mighty Comfort sure it was) to remember, that he had enjoy'd them innocently, and employ'd them faithfully. Under the heavy Load of all the Evils he at present suffer'd, 'twas, no doubt, a great Refreshment to his Spirits, to consider that 'twas not for any notorious Provocation of his God, or Injury to his *Neighbour*, that they were come upon him. Under all the Reproaches of his Enemies, and the Uncharitableness of his Friends, he could at all times appeal to his Conscience for Redress ; nay, in Confidence of his *Integrity*, he boldly durst look up to God himself, and *maintain his ways before him* ; Bid
Job. 13. 15. him judge, *whether he had not walked innocently*, and if there were any Wickedness in his Hands ; not without an humble Assurance also, that

that God, in his own good time, would *take away his Plagues* from him, would speedily remove the Afflictions with which he had been pleas'd to visit him, more, he knew, for the *trial* of his *Patience*, than the *Punishment* of his *Sins*; that he would graciously *turn again at the last*, and reward him after his *righteous dealing*, Psal. 18. 25.

and according to the cleanness of his hands in his eyesight. Such Hope and Confidence had Holy Job at a time when all other Hope and Confidence fail'd him, in the Sense of his Innocency, and the Integrity of his ways; and no wonder therefore if we find him so very loth to let it go; no wonder if he held it fast, as his best and most valuable Treasure, as something much dearer to him than *Life* it self, because 'twas this alone could support the Miseries of *Life*, and in God's good time make way for the Removal of them. *Till I die*, says he, *I will not remove my Integrity from me*, &c.

In discoursing to you on these Words, the plain and familiar Use I would beg leave to make of them, shall be only this, To shew you the Wisdom of this Resolution, of *holding fast our Integrity*, and never letting it go, upon any Prospect or Temptation whatsoever.

Had this great Example of Patience and Fidelity been giv'n us in these loose unsettled Times of ours, Men, instead of imitating the *Steddiness*, would have laugh'd, I am afraid, at the *Impolicy* of his Principles. *They Fools* would have counted his *Life Madness*, and Wis. 5. 4. wonder'd what he meant by *serving God for nought*, and still retaining his *Integrity*, when he found

himself so very ill encourag'd for it.

I wou'd not willingly be thought to speak uncharitably of the *Age* and *Country* we live in, but I heartily wish we were less able to justify the Severity of this Reflection. For what, alas! is become of those old antiquated Notions of *Honour* and *Conscience*, of *Virtue* and *Religion*, so justly extoll'd in the Writings of the *Heathens*, and so eminently conspicuous in the Sufferings of the *Christians*? I doubt, upon Enquiry 'twill be found, that we have little more than the *Name* and the *Profession* of them alive amongst us: Here and there perhaps we may meet with an honest well-meaning Man, who shall dare upon Occasion still to *Speak* and *Suffer* for them; but the *Crafty* and the *Cunning*, and the great Pretenders to the *Wisdom of this World*, have long since exploded them, and taken up a more convenient Set of Principles in their room. They, *good Men*, to give them their due, can be as Faithful to their *God*, as Dutiful to their *Prince*, and as Honest to their *Neighbour*, as one would wish 'em, as long as there is nothing to be lost, as long as there is any thing to be got by being so. They, *good Christians*, can come to *Church* to Day for a *good Place*, and with ev'ry whit as good a *Conscience*, go and *betray* that *Church* To-morrow for a *better*. To favour a Design, they can be *loud*, and *warm*, and stickle for *this* or *that* Religion, and when they have no further Occasion for it, as easily bring themselves to shake Hands with *all*: They never trouble themselves with considering what is *Virtuous*, but what is *Safe*; influenc'd in their Actions by no other Principle, but the Hopes
of

of Advantage, or the Fears of Inconvenience, and ready to *stand* about with the first fair Wind that shall promise but to carry them on with *Success*, and bring them off again with *Safety*.

If this now be the *Wisdom of this World*, as Confident and as Popular as it is, it will be found upon Enquiry to be *but* 1 Cor. 13. 19.

Foolishness with God. The Way, which God hath pointed out, whereby we may arrive at Happiness, is quite *Opposite* to this: The Tracks and Footsteps of our Duty are all along as plain and as legible as we can wish; and if we will but follow them, will lead us on as strait and as direct a Path as we can go. So that the very Windings and Turnings, through which Unfaithfulness wanders, are enough to convince us, that it mistakes its Course, and instead of carrying us, as it pretends, a shorter way, is losing sight apace of Happiness, and insensibly making on to Misery.

And how indeed can *these* Men possibly fail of being in the Wrong, when the very *first Step* they advance proceeds upon *Mistake*? And their Mistake is this; They falsly divide their *Duty* from their *Interest*, the Two Things in the World of all others most strictly inseparable. For 'tis as certain as the Appointment of God, and the Nature of the Thing it self can make it, that every Man is so far *happy* as he is *virtuous*, and *miserable* as he is *vicious*. Upon this Foundation it is, that the Happiness of *God* himself is conceiv'd to stand; for could we but suppose it possible for that Infinite Being to decline but never so little from those Eternal Rules of Holiness and Equity, which he steddily pursues, God himself would from that ve-

ry Instant immediately cease to be *Happy*, and begin to be *Miserable*. Had the *Devil* himself but *held fast his Integrity*, he had been *Happy* still; nor can he ever destroy the *Happiness* of *Man*, but by persuading him to that by which he lost *his* own.

God may sometimes *suffer him to put forth his hand*, and to *touch all that we have*: He may consume our *Families*, and plunder our *Estates*, and torment our *Bodies*: All this we find he did to Holy *Job*; but then this was the *worst* and the *utmost* he could do. And what, alas! is all this to the Forfeiture of a good Conscience, and the Loss of our *Integrity*? If we keep but Masters still of these, in spite of any outward Calamities which can befall us, we may still make a shift to live tolerably easy, we may be sure, we can never be extremely *Miserable* under them: Nay, it is our own Fault too, if we are not in many Respects considerably the better for them. But if ever we should be unhappily persuaded, upon what Account soever, *to let these go*, our Case is desperate; we have made our selves as compleatly *Miserable* as the *Devil* himself can wish us; We leave our selves naked and exposed to the severest of his Cruelties, and what's worst of all, we have lost the only thing in the World that can serve to make them tolerable. And therefore 'tis, that God who has made so sure Provision for our *Happiness*, that we have no body but our selves to thank, if we are *Miserable*, hath giv'n us a more secure Possession of our *Integrity*, than of any one thing in the World besides, that we can call our own. Other Things he hath left us the *uncertain* Masters of; but the Sense of our
Innocency,

Innocency, but the Satisfaction of a good Conscience, are essential to our *Happiness*, and therefore always in our Power: Our *Integrity* is that better Part, which may be abandon'd by *Cowardice*, or giv'n up by *Treachery*, but can never by down-right Violence be taken from us, *Luk. 10. 42.*

And therefore the Wisdom of resolving to hold it fast and never to let it go, will abundantly appear, as from several other Considerations I might mention, so more especially from these that follow:

First, Because in parting with our Integrity we let go that, without which, *Prosperity* it self can never make us *Happy*.

Secondly, Because we let go that, which being once gone, *Affliction* needs must render us insupportably miserable.

And Thirdly, We let go that, which alone can avail us in the Day of Judgment.

And First, I say, in parting with our Integrity, we let go that, without which, *Prosperity* it self can never make us *Happy*.

I am apt to believe, there is not any one Mistake about the Matters of Religion, has done it more real Disservice, than that which Men so very frequently run into, concerning the seeming Happiness of the Wicked in this Life. How many false Exceptions against *Providence*, and Discouragements from *Virtue*, has it sometimes started in the best of Men? How often does it stagger the honest Man, and make him almost repent of his Integrity, and begin to think with the *Psalmist*, that he hath cleans'd his heart in vain, and wash'd his hands

in Innocency, when he sees the *Ungodly* (as it sometimes happens) *in such Prosperity*? *Ps. 73. 13.* 'Tis true indeed, and must not be deny'd, that as to the outward Advantages of this Life, its *Riches*, its *Power*, its *Honours*, and the like, (tho' by the way, *Integrity* is generally observ'd to bid fairest for them) yet they are not so strictly appropriated to the *Vertuous* only, but that God does sometimes suffer them to become the *Inheritance* of *Folly*, and the *Recompence* of *Vice*. But even in this seeming Equality of his Distributions to the *Wicked* and the *Good*, God, we may observe, has made a very sensible Distinction, and done abundantly enough to justify the Conduct of his *Providence*, and the *Wisdom* of our *Integrity*. Both of them, 'tis true, (both the *Wicked* and the *Good*) may be equally *Rich*, and *Honourable*, and *Mighty* in the World: But then *both* can never be equally *happy*: God punishes the *Wicked* with those very *Blessings* he admits him to partake of, and to make his *Prosperity* it self a *Curse* to him, denies him, in his *Anger*, the *Power* of Enjoying it. For what *Enjoyment*, alas! can the *Wicked* ever taste in the lawless *Acquisitions* of prosperous *Fraud*, or successful *Violence*? *Fret not thy self* (saith the *Psalmist*) *because of the ungodly, neither be thou envious against the evil doer*, *Ps. 39.* Never grudge him the *Rise* of his *Honours*, nor the *Increase* of his *Estate*: If they were twice as large, and as many as they are, he abundantly deserves them all: Never fear, the *Man* has paid for them to purpose, and for ought we know, undone himself by the *Purchase*. Perhaps he has *renounc'd* his *God*, or *dissembled* his *Religion*; it may be he has *sold* his *Country*, or *betray'd*

trayed his Master for them : Perhaps he has been doing nothing else these many Years, but plundering the *Fatherless*, and oppressing the *Widow*.

And now we may fairly ask him, *To what purpose was all this waste?* This Mat. 26.8.
vast irreparable Expence of Honour and Conscience, and whatever else is truly Valuable? And what has he got after all this mighty Labour of sinful Industry, but the Pleasure at last of *appearing* to be Happy, and the Pain of being *really* Miserable?

Envy not therefore (says the Wiseman) *the Glory of the Sinner, for thou knowest not what shall be his end:* Nay, thou knowest not so much as how it fares at present with him. In the *sight of the unwise* Ecclus 9.11.
he seems to be happy? They stand ignorantly gazing at the Brightness of his Figure, and never suspect all the while the Miseries it conceals : They see him only in his best Light, and in his easy Hours, when his *Pleasures* or his *Company* are amusing him, or when *Business* diverts him from preying on himself. But could they but follow him into the Agonies of his Retirement, and there behold the wretched Creature accusing, condemning, and tormenting himself, ever jealous of Discovery, and afraid of Punishment, they would pity and lament him heartily, notwithstanding all his Splendor and his Jollity, and begin to think with *Solomon*, that (if this be the Joy of Sinners) then *better is a little with Righteousness, than great Revenues without Right* : Prov. 16.8.
Better to wander about from House to House, an honest chearful *Pilgrim*, without so much as Bread to eat, or a Place

a Place where to rest our weary Head, than to sleep, and surfeit in the *Dwellings of Unrighteousness.*

And how should the Thought of this make every *honest* Man (the *poorest* Man amongst us, if he be but *honest*) how, I say, should it make him bless himself, and his Integrity, and resolve with Holy *Job* to *hold it fast, and never let it go*, and think himself, as he really is, infinitely more happy with the little that he has, than the Ungodly can ever be, *in the abundance of the things that he possesseth*? If 'tis but little that he has, he enjoys that Little fearless and secure; fearless of any Injuries from others, because he never knew what 'twas to practise any, and secure of his Providence, who

careth for the Righteous, and hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants. But as for the Ungodly, it is not so with them. *In the Revenues of the Wicked* (says the Wiseman) *there is Trouble.* The

Tears of the Fatherless, and the Clamours of the Injur'd are continually disputing his Title, and disturbing his Possession. He will be ever and anon reflecting, how unfairly he came by what he has, and how easily he may lose it. Every one he meets with, he naturally suspects of the same treacherous Designs he himself is guilty of, and fancies they are contriving how to revenge the Publick, and make Reprisals on him. As for God and his Providence, he never thinks on them, but with Horror and Amazement: For how can he expect God should long secure him, in those Possessions he has obtained in *defiance* of his Laws, and by the Assistance of his Enemies;

mies; and which he had neither the *Modesty* to ask of him, nor the *Gratitude* to thank him for?

And here I dare appeal to the greatest, and the best-paid *Sinner* of them all, and for once will venture to admit his Evidence. Let him tell us, if he can, he who has been so long Trading with the Devil for his Integrity, whether he thinks he ever yet did give him a fair Equivalent for it. When did he ever reap so great Advantage from it, as not a thousand times since to repent him of his Bargain? How often, if the Truth were known, and how heartily has he wished, that every body had their own, and he the Peace of his Conscience again? Or lastly, Let him tell us, if he can, what One good Day he remembers to have seen, since he foolishly parted with the Pleasures of his Innocency? No; without these, 'tis impossible he should be happy: Heaven it self, could a Man be supposed to go guilty thither, would never make him so. And if this be then the Case; if those few, who let go a Good Conscience at their own Price, and the best the Devil can afford to give them, if they have yet no better Bargain than this to brag of, what a wretched uncomfortable one must those poor Creatures make, who sell their Integrity for nought, and take no Money for it? If the Riches, and the Honours, and the best Assignments the Devil can make us, are themselves but Punishments; I hope, the Disgraces and the Miseries he generally pays us in, will pass upon no body for very desirable Encouragements. But this Consideration will more naturally fall under the Second Head I propos'd to speak to; which was,

The Wisdom of Integrity.

That in parting with our *Integrity*, we let go that, which being once gone, *Affliction* needs must render us insupportably *miserable*.

There is not any thing in the Life of Man, he may with so much Certainty depend upon, as a Share in the Troubles that inseparably accompany it. And to hear the Complaints Men are every Hour of the Day making on this Subject, one would really believe, there was no one Truth in the World they are more experimentally convinc'd of. And yet, alas! how very few amongst them do we see make any Provision at all for that, which all are sensible that *no body* can avoid; or however, not that *wise* and that *safe* Provision, which alone may be depended on for Service and Support? As long as the World runs smoothly on their side, on they travel thoughtless and secure; never considering, that tho' 'tis fair and sun-shine now, the Weather soon may change, and a Storm they little dream of, break suddenly upon them. *Tush*, say the Fools to themselves, in their vain Security, *we shall never be cast down, there shall no harm happen unto us*: They think, they are sufficiently provided with Shelter and Retreat: They have been a long time *strengthening themselves in the Multitude of their Riches*, in the Number of their Dependants, and the Interest of their *Alliances*. But, alas! no sooner do the Rains descend, and the Floods come, and the Winds begin to blow and beat upon them, but these blind Projectors to their Sorrow find, that they have all this while been working on a false Foundation, and fortifying on the Sand. Whereas the Wise and the Honest Man, who

who builds upon the sure Foundations of his own Integrity, stands unshaken and secure. The *Rains* may descend, the *Floods* may come, the *Winds* may blow and beat upon him, but the Bottom he leans upon, is sound and good, and will bear the severest Stress of Wind and Weather. Afflictions may dash and spend themselves upon him, but his *Hope* and his *Confidence* (like the *Rock* it is built upon) may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever. Ps. 125. 1.

This, *Job* in his Prosperity was happily aware of, and delayed not to make Provision for it accordingly. The most flourishing of his Fortunes could never make him forget that they were slippery and uncertain; That a time might come, when his *Riches* would fly away, his *Glory* vanish, and his *Friends* forsake him: And therefore he wisely be-
thought himself to make sure of one: One Friend he knew he had, A *Conscience*, I mean, well-assured of its *Integrity*, which had never basely flatter'd him in his Prosperity, and was the more unlikely therefore to forsake him in Adversity. This therefore he resolved to hold fast, and never let it go. And how soon did he live to make Tryal of this Friendship, and bless the Choice that had so happily secured it! For in the Day of that Distress which so surprizingly beset him, when his Neighbours and his Kindred, and his own Familiar Friends in whom he trusted, forsook him hastily and fled, this faithfully accompanied him into the worst of Fortunes, and wonderfully supported him under them: Then the blessing of him that was ready to perish came seasonably upon him, because he had deliver'd the Poor when he cry'd, the Fatherless,

Job 29. 13.

and him that had none to help. *In the multitude of the Sorrows that he had in his Heart, these Comforts still refreshed his Soul, that he had never done any thing, that he knew of, to deserve so severe a Punishment; had never attempted sinfully to avoid his Troubles before they came, nor unlawfully to break loose from them, after they were fallen upon him. And therefore since his heart condemned him not, he would still continue to have confidence towards God; and in the Hopes of his Mercy, and the Assurance of his Favour, wait with patience all the days of his appointed time, until his change should come; when God should once more remember Job and all his troubles, and comfort him again after the time that he had plagu'd him, and for the years wherein he had suffer'd adversity.*

The spirit of a man, with these Reflections to support it, will go a great way towards sustaining his Infirmities, and carry him on thro' this short Vale of Life and Misery, and the Shadow of Death it self, with Comfort and Security. But a wounded spirit who can bear? When that which alone can give us any Comfort, it self is Comfortless; when the Devil has assaulted us, and our God forsaken us, and our own Minds the mean while write better things against us; when every Stroke we feel, carries in it the Marks of a Punishment, and the Reproaches of Sin; and we have hardly so much as the Remembrance of any one good Action we have done, to refresh our drooping Spirits; What can sustain a Man oppress'd with these Sorrows, and acquainted with such Grievs?

And

And yet how light are *these* Sorrows, how easy are *these* Grievs, under all the guilty Miseries of Life, if compared with those a wounded Spirit feels, when Death and Judgment look it in the Face ! How will the Man, doth he think, behave himself, when he feels his Soul draw nigh unto Hell, and the Pains of Death get hold upon him ? Ps. 88. 3. What would he now give for the Supports of that Integrity, which once he might have kept, but which then he wantonly prostituted to a Lust, or sacrificed to a Passion ? What would he now give for the Comforts of that Faith, which, it may be, he has long ago renounc'd for Impunity, or dissembled for Preferment ? Right precious then in his sight will be the Death of God's Saints, and the Pains of their Martyrdom itself desirable. How will he wish a thousand, and a thousand Times, that he had dy'd like one of these, for the Testimony of a good Conscience, rather than thus have expir'd under the Torments of a bad one ? He then should have had the Righteousness of his Cause, and the Presence of his God, and the Assurance of his Reward, to support and comfort him. And, O ! what a blessed Confidence, what an unshaken Security will these Refreshments give us at our Departure hence ! Then when we walk thro' the Gloominess of Death itself, even then to fear no evil ! Psal. 23. Then to be able to look back on the World we are about to leave, and with a Satisfaction not altogether unlike to that of its Creator ; to see that all that we have done in it is good, Gen. 1. Nothing that we have done in it, is unpardonably wicked : Then to be able to say unto God with our departing Breath, and with good Hezekiah's humble Confidence, Re-
member

member now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, Isa. 38. 3. I say, if there be any thing in *this World*, can deserve a serious Wish, 'tis a Conscience always thus prepar'd to leave it: And since God, and our Integrity are our best, and our last Supports, both in Life and in Death, that he will never suffer us, for any Pleasures of Life, for any Pains of Death, to fall from him.

But Thirdly and Lastly,

He that lets go his Integrity, parts with that which alone can avail him in the Day of Judgment.

And indeed, if there were nothing in any of the foregoing Considerations to evince the Necessity of resolving to hold it fast, this One Consideration alone, exclusive of all others, were abundantly sufficient. For let us now allow the dishonest Person as many, and as great Advantages, as ever any Man could yet propose to himself, and many more, God knows, than ever any yet could find by being so: We'll suppose his Villanies for once (which yet they never were) infallibly secure of Secrecy and Success; We'll load him with as many ill-gotten Honours and Estates, as Avarice and Ambition it self can wish for; We'll give him too upon the Supposal, that which in reality he is utterly incapable of, the Power of enjoying all this without Disturbance or Remorse, and of living as pleasantly, and of dying as easily, as much Honester Men can do without them: Why, truly all this put together, will amount to a very fair Provision for the short Stay we are to make in *this Life*: But then 'tis a Provision for *this Life* only. What Preparation (if a Man may ask him) has the Fool been all this while a making for
Eternity?

Eternity? He that is so dextrous at striking in with every pitiful Advantage, and declining every little Inconvenience in his Way, has he been *wise* enough, with all his Cunning, to secure *Eternal Happiness*? Has he been *careful* enough, with all his Caution, to avoid *Eternal Misery*? If he has not, God knows, he has been plotting and contriving, and taking Abundance of Pains to very little purpose. For, alas! our Great and Final Interest lies out in *another* Country, and beyond the Grave; and 'tis the grossest Misapplying of our Consideration imaginable, to contrive only how we shall rub on the few *Days*, and *Months*, and *Years* we have to live, and never once to bethink our selves what will *at last* become of us, and in what Condition we shall subsist *for ever*?

Now whatever Hopes a Man may have of Carrying on an Interest in *this* World, by acting contrary to his Duty, no Man, I dare say, was ever weak enough to imagine, it could be of any Service to him in *another*. Nay, does not every Man's Conscience directly tell him, that it will not? Upon every Unlawful Action he commits, does he not immediately feel a Regular Process commence within him? And is he not as certainly *accus'd*, *convicted*, and *condemn'd* upon the Spot? And happy we! *to-day*, if we will hear this mighty Voice, and not *harden our hearts*, Ps. 95. 8. but be warn'd by its Whispers, to avoid the Thunder that will one Day accompany it: For, if we will not hearken to them now, the Time will come, when our Consciences will be heard by us, whether we will or no: When the *Devil* shall join in Charging home the Evidence, and God himself appear to confirm the

the *Sentence*. And then shall all the Celebrated Arts of Dissimulation and Hypocrisy be detected and expos'd, and lye down in the Shame and Misery of those that practis'd them; and the strictest *Honesty* be found upon the whole to have been the truest *Policy*. Then, happy they! who instead of Purchasing any thing in this Life at the *Hazard* of their *Soul*, were glā to lose even Life it self, that they might *save* it! How bold and fearless will they stand before the dread Tribunal, secure of being *justify'd in their trial, and clear when they are judg'd*! Ps. 51. 4. How will it transport them, to hear their *Innocency* vindicated, and their *Integrity* proclaim'd, and their *Wisdom* applauded in the Ears of all Men! With what *pleasure* then will they *look back on the past travail of their Soul, and be satisfy'd*! Isa. 53. 11. on all the little Hardships and Discouragements they have met with here below, in the Cause of *afflicted Virtue*, and of *persecuted Truth*! And how will they bless the *Torments*, and the *Death* it self, that at last has brought them, thro' so *light* a Tryal, to so *inconceivable* an Happiness! *In the eyes of men they were punish'd, and their departure was taken for misery*, Wisd. 3. 4. But now are they *number'd with the children of God*, and their *lot is amongst his Saints*! chap. 5. ver. 5. Where having been a *little chastis'd*, they shall be *greatly rewarded*: Where God himself shall graciously condescend to bid them welcome to their Happiness, and in these Transporting Words, at once *acknowledge and recompence* their Integrity: Mat. 25. 21. *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant! thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.*

